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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002539

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Mideast
2. Muslims in European Society

Key stories in the media:

Israel Radio reported that a week ago President Shimon Peres met in his office with Palestinian PM Salam Fayyad and that he is willing

to meet with PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas.

Israel Radio quoted the London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi as saying that Chairman Abbas is trying to convince Israel to let exiled organization heads in Syria return to the Palestinian territories, in order to keep Damascus from using them to interfere with Palestinian affairs.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the first preparatory meeting leading to the 2009 UN World Conference against Racism will take place at the UN offices in Geneva next week and be chaired by Libya, and that the UN watchdog UN Watch already dubs it a "second Durban."

The 2002 conference in Durban, South Africa, was a theater for powerful anti-Israel rhetoric.

All media reported that on Monday an IAF missile hit a truck in Bureij, in the central Gaza Strip, killing six Hamas gunmen who had launched mortar shells at Israel. Israel Radio quoted Palestinian sources as saying that Naser Mabrouk, a PFLP militant, was killed in a clash with the IDF in Nablus.

Major media quoted European Union officials as saying on Monday that the EU has stopped paying for shipments to Gaza's main power plant over concerns that Hamas might tax electricity to fund its government. Leading media reported that Egypt subsequently announced that it will continue to supply electricity to the Gaza Strip.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Israeli defense establishment is fiercely opposed to a UN initiative to redraw Israel's border with Lebanon and ultimately revoke Israeli sovereignty over the Sheba Farms. The newspaper reported that a UN cartographer sent by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is expected to visit the Sheba Farms in the coming weeks.

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday Fatah legislator Muhammad Dahlan returned to Ramallah after spending six weeks abroad for medical treatment, sparking speculation about his future plans. The newspaper quoted some Fatah activists as saying that he would openly challenge the leadership of PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli diplomatic officials have made clear in recent days that Israel continues to express its displeasure with Moscow over arms sales to Syria. The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli officials see Russian economic and strategic interests behind such sales. Maariv quoted the official Syrian newspaper Tishrin as saying on Monday that Israel has bellicose intentions. Tishrin wrote that US military aid to Israel is evidence of the latter's shortage of weapons.

The Jerusalem Post and other media reported that a survey by the American journal Foreign Policy showing that 15 of 108 foreign policy leaders in the US believe that Israel does not serve US national security interests has raised eyebrows in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Post says that the survey precedes the publication in early September of a book by two US professors slamming the US-Israel alliance. The Jerusalem Post also reported that the British daily The Financial Times released a poll that showed the Israel was no longer viewed in large parts of Europe, or in the US, as a threat to global security.

Ha'aretz quoted Rani Loewenstein, a senior Israeli official, as saying that the Palestinian government needs to establish an alternative social security net in the West Bank in order to beat Hamas at its own game and win elections. Ha'aretz wrote that Loewenstein's plan was recently handed over to senior Palestinian officials during a closed conference at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. According to the newspaper, Loewenstein is considered one of the closest Israeli officials to Palestinian PM Salam Fayyad and Israel's main liaison with the Palestinians on economic and financial affairs over the last five years.

Leading media quoted Defense Minister Ehud Barak as saying on Monday that the IDF needs to be bigger and more technologically advanced to deal properly with future threats.

Ha'aretz reported that Israeli military sources told the newspaper on Monday that the army does not intend to renew its contract with

some 170 security guards in West Bank settlements.

Maariv reported that most Sudanese refugees who have arrived in Israel are Christians who do not come from the Darfur province. They were persecuted because of their religion.

Leading media quoted Bank of Israel Governor Stanley Fischer as saying on Monday that the sub-prime mortgage crisis does not affect the Israeli economy.

The Jerusalem Post reported that an Israeli team of six doctors and nurses left on Monday night to assist earthquake victims in Peru. Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Knesset Member Prof. Shlomo Breznitz (Kadima) has launched a volunteers project called "Backpackers in India," involving public and private Israeli organizations. Former Knesset Member Etti Livni, who is active in the project, was quoted as saying: "The project could be a means of creating links between Israeli and Indian youth for the sake of peace and society. It will also be held to show the other face of Israel and Israelis in India.

Maariv reported that Lisa Damast (phon.), a former assistant to Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, will immigrate to Israel today.

In its lead story, Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that over 25,000 Israelis working in high-tech -- out of 60,000 -- have left for the US over the past seven years.

IDF Radio and other media reported that senior Israel National Police officer Asher Ben-Artzi was placed on involuntary leave. He is suspected of having helped criminal elements receive visas to the US.

I1. Mideast:

Summary:

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "[Israel] has entered an era of poor leadership with respect to its quality, its motivation, and its ability to put an end to the occupation."

Palestinian affairs correspondent Danny Rubinstein wrote in Ha'aretz: "Hamas and the PA will come to an arrangement. Israel's adamant opposition to any compromise and its threats against Abu Mazen should he make concessions to Hamas will not succeed in preventing this."

Block Quotes:

I1. "August's Hot Air Balloons"

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (8/21): "The initiative to sum up the principles of [an] agreement [with Mahmoud Abbas] within two or three months lacks a foundation and has no basis in reality. As compared to Menachem Begin, who evacuated all of Sinai, and to Ariel Sharon, who evacuated 23 Jewish settlements in the territories, Olmert has barely evacuated two families from Hebron -- at most. His coalition partner, Labor Party Chairman and Defense Minister Ehud Barak, holds that we do not have a partner for a permanent status agreement and need at least five years to get the Israel Defense Forces back on its feet. The country has entered an era of poor leadership with respect to its quality, its motivation, and its ability to put an end to the occupation. 'When little people cast a big shadow, it is a sign that the sun is setting,' goes the ancient Chinese proverb. Fact: August is already on its way out, without peace, without war, with two or three Qassam rockets and many hot air balloons afloat."

II. "The Palestinian Wrestling Match"

Palestinian affairs correspondent Danny Rubinstein wrote in Ha'aretz (8/21): "The Hamas regime in Gaza will survive. Abu Mazen's PA in the West Bank will continue to boycott it, and it will also continue to conduct negotiations with Israel over an agreement on principles, which might well be achieved in the coming weeks. But this will obviously be a virtual agreement, because the road to implementation is still long, and without Hamas, such an agreement is in any case of little value. Neither side is capable of defeating the other, and therefore, they will have no alternative but to negotiate and arrive at an agreement sooner or later. The Palestinian public in both Gaza and the West Bank wants national unity, as do many parts of the Arab world and the international community. Therefore, the pressure in this direction on leaders in both Gaza and the West Bank will increase, until in the end, Hamas and the PA will come to an arrangement. Israel's adamant opposition to any compromise and its threats against Abu Mazen should he make concessions to Hamas will not succeed in preventing this."

12. Muslims in European Society:

Summary:

Columnist Zali Yafe wrote in the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe: "The West will pay dearly for not facing with the fact that the most common first name among English babies is 'Muhammad.'"

Block Quotes:

"Nothing Suspicious in the West"

Columnist Zali Yafe wrote in the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe (8/21): "Regrettably, many people believe that the Israeli-Arab conflict is the source of the [current] danger and that of the new terror taking hold of the world. Of course this is a very convenient 'assumption,' which will lead nowhere.... The West will pay dearly for not understanding that Israel is the only country that truly fights terror. The West will pay dearly for not facing with the fact that the most common first name among English babies is 'Muhammad.' It will pay dearly for not doing anything ahead of 2043, when France will have a Muslim majority.... If the West does not wake up it will be late. There is a time for conciliation and a time for having second thoughts. Conciliating a body whose real purpose is to destroy the other has not succeeded in the past, and will not succeed in the future with organizations like Hizbullah and Al-Qaida because the idea contradicts religious fundamentalist beliefs."

JONES